DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 519 HE 008 123

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TITLE Black College: Honors Program Cost Analysis.
INSTITUTION Alcorn State Univ., Lorman, Miss.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 7p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cost Effectiveness; Credits; Educational Economics; Expenditure Per Student; *Higher Education; *Honors Curriculum; *Negro Colleges; *Negro Students; *Program Costs

ABSTRACT

To ascertain the actual cost of an honors program for any given year at Alcorn State University, two methods were used: cost per student, and the cost per credit hour. The cost per student can be a misleading figure and that is particularly apparent when used in conjunction with the cost per credit hour. For example, in 1975-76 the cost per honor student was $533, compared to an undergraduate figure of $610. However, the cost per credit hour of honor students was $89 compared to $20 for undergraduate students. The Honor Program's cost per credit hour does appear to be high when compared with the total undergraduate cost per credit hour. However, it must be noted that the average honor program's faculty member has a credit-hour load of approximately 15 hours. A load of this magnitude is generally considered to be excessive, particularly when faculty may be called on to teach a graduate course. (Author)

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ED125519

BLACK COLLEGE: HONORS PROGRAM COST ANALYSIS

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HE008123

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH
ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
AUGUST 5, 1976

Title: Black College: Honors Program Cost Analysis

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Abstract:

This study was completed to ascertain the actual cost of an Honors Program for any given year at Alcorn State University. The Honors Program has been in existance since 1966 and has had a low of 27 students and a high of 84 students. The two methods used for determining the cost were cost per student and the cost per credit hour. The cost per student can be a misleading figure and that is particularly apparent when used in conjunction with the cost per credit hour. For example, in 1975-76 the cost per honor student was $533 compared to an undergraduate figure of $610. However, the cost per credit hour of honor students was $89 compared to $20 for undergraduate students.

Introduction:

The Honors Program at a given institution of Higher Education is sometimes one of the first places considered when a cost conscious faculty gets together and determines something must be cut. Usually someone indicates that a cost effectiveness study should be made of the Honors Program and no one is too certain if a valid study can be done.

Cost effectiveness in essence means attaching some form of product measurement with the actual cost of producing this product. Most educators would proabably agree that it is difficult to measure just

exactly what the Honors Program has produced. This usually results in a cost analysis study which does not result in a product measurement. However, it does tell you what it cost to produce the product.

Methodology:

Data was collected for each year the Honors Program has been functioning. This data consisted of the name of each student, name of each faculty member, budget allocated to the Honors Program, faculty salary by rank, and faculty load. The data was tabulated and analyzed for easier elaboration and comparison.

Findings:

The data collection of the number of students and faculty positions revealed some interesting figures. (See Table I) Since the Honors Program's inception in 1966-67 there has been a high of 84 students and a low of 27 students for a given year. Also, there has been a high of 11 faculty positions and a low of 4 faculty positions per year. It must be noted that these figures include the first four years of the Honors Program which started out with a Freshman group progressing to Sophomore, Junior and Senior for each succeeding year. The year 1969-70 was the first year for a full compliment of freshman through senior honor students. Since the year of 1969-70 there has been a mean of 49.2 students in the Honors Program and a mean of 9.42 faculty positions. This would produce a faculty to student ratio of 1 to 5. The current total faculty to undergraduate student ratio is 1 to 23.

The cost of the Honors Program can be determined by the cost per student and the cost per credit hour. (See Table II) The major cost factor is the faculty with secondary factors being travel, supplies, and a secretary's salary.

The 1971-72 and 1975-76 academic years indicate the cost per honor student is less than the cost per student of all undergraduates. A five year analysis demonstrates the average honor student cost per year is $590 compared to $597 for all undergraduates. These figures are based on the F.T.E. faculty salary compared to the F.T.E. of all students in each category.

Credit hour production is another method for analyzing the cost factor. Table II aptly demonstrates the significant differences between credit hour cost of the Honors Program's cost per credit hour in 1974-75 was $121 as compared to $23 for the undergraduate program. These figures indicate a difference of $98 per credit hour. The means for the Honors Program and undergraduate program are $98 and $20 respectively with a difference of $78.

Conclusion:

The Honors Program's cost per credit hour does appear to be high when compared with the total undergraduate cost per credit hour. However, it must be noted the average Honors Program's faculty member has a credit hour load of approximately 15 hours. A load of this magnitude is generally considered to be excessive particularly when they may be called on to teach a graduate course.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF HONOR STUDENTS AND FACULTY
POSITIONS PER ACADMIC YEAR

Academic Year	Number of Students Fall Semester	Number of Faculty Positions
75-76	60	11
74-75	42	11
73-74	27	7
72-73	33	8
71-72	54	9
70-71	58	10
69-70	72	10
68-69[1]	84	7
67-68[2]	46	6
66-67[3]	31	4
Total Mean	50.70	8.30
1969-70 to 1975-76 Mean	49.42	9.42

1. No Seniors
2. No Juniors or Seniors
3. No Sophomore, Juniors or Seniors

TABLE II

COST ANALYSIS OF
THE HONORS PROGRAM

Academic Year	Average salary of Honor Faculty for 9 month	Estimated cost for travel, supplies & secretary	Estimated total for 9 month cost of program	Cost per Honor Student	Cost per credit hour[1]	Cost per student of all undergraduates[2]	Cost per credit hour of all undergraduates[3]
75-76	$13,632	$2,000	$31,986	$533	$ 89	$610	$20
74-75	$12,985	$2,000	$30,567	$728	$121	$684	$23
73-74	$12,408	$2,000	$19,367	$717	$119	$640	$21
72-73	$10,875	$1,750	$19,220	$582	$ 97	$562	$19
71-72	$10,793	$1,750	$21,181	$392	$ 65	$488	$16
MEAN	$12,139	$1,900	$24,464	$590	$ 98	$597	$20

1. Based on 6 hours for 9 months.
2. Based on total F.T.E. faculty salary per 9 months and total F.T.E. undergraduage students.
3. Based on 30 hours for 9 months.

NOTE: All figures rounded to the nearest whole number.